

The University of Chicago

CONDITIONS AFFECTING USE OF
THE COLLEGE LIBRARY

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE
LIBRARY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1934

By
ERRETT WEIR McDIARMID, JR.

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CONDITIONS AFFECTING USE OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY

THE PROBLEM

THE present age is one in which books are playing an ever increasing part. The United States publishes more than eight thousand books each year. Many hundreds of others are imported from other countries. All these are additions to the millions of books already in existence. Even professional specialists are hard pressed to keep abreast of the publications in one narrow field. How much greater is the problem of the ordinary person who wishes to find in this ocean of books those which will contribute to his understanding of life.

Educators are aware of this difficulty. They are concerned perhaps more seriously than ever before that students shall attain by experience an ability to use intelligently the stores of books that are almost everywhere made available for public use. Hence college instruction is coming to depend more and more upon wide use of the college library.¹

The college library must operate efficiently in the face of this increased emphasis on reading. There must be not only larger and better book collections, larger facilities for reading, and an organization of books in terms of curricular requirements, but also a continuous survey of student's needs and interests. The present investigation undertakes to supply certain data of the sort required to achieve a planned economy of library administration. Essentially, it attempts to develop a procedure whereby student use of the library may be most efficiently evaluated in terms of conditions peculiar to a particular institution, to a particular group of students, and to a particular academic department.

¹ Cf. F. W. Reeves and J. D. Russell, "The Relation of the college library to recent movements in higher education," *Library quarterly*, I (January, 1931), 59.

Procedure.—During the spring semester of 1932-33, seven college libraries² in the North Central area recorded all the titles borrowed by each student. These records included not only "reserved" and "non-reserved" (or free) loans, but also renewals and successive uses of a single title. The record did not include student use of reference volumes or magazines. Nor did it include reading from sources other than the college library.

The registrars of the seven colleges listed the courses taken by each student and the grades received in each. The facts concerning library holdings and finance were obtained from data secured for the North Central Association study of library standards.

SOME FACTORS OF STUDENT LIBRARY USE

Four conditions among others may be assumed to influence student reading appreciably; namely, (1) sex, (2) class—i.e., differences between freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, (3) scholarship, and (4) environment of the given institution as contrasted with others. Differences in use of the library influenced by these conditions will be described by total number of books borrowed (reserved and free loans combined).³

Sex differences.—Table I shows the titles borrowed by men and women. The number of titles for men and women differs widely, women students being the heavier readers.⁴

Several factors may account for the fact that women borrow more than men. First, it is highly probable that the amount of time spent in reading does not vary so greatly in favor of women as the number of books withdrawn. In a study of 2,695 teachers-college students, Waples found the following:⁵

Thus while women read on the average more books, they ac-

² Certain considerations make it inadvisable to refer to the colleges by name. When the names are needed for future studies, requests may be addressed to the author.

³ Differences in use of the library by class, sex, scholarship, and college groups are constant whether loans be considered *en bloc* or divided into reserved and free loans.

⁴ Over twenty times the P.E.

⁵ D. Waples and M. Birkeland, "Reading interests and social attitudes." Unpublished manuscript to be published as a part of the National survey of the education of teachers, 1932.

tually spend less time in reading per week, according to their own estimates; they can read faster and more widely than men in the same length of time. Men, on the other hand, spend more time in reading per week, a slightly larger per cent of which is spent on newspapers. Further evidence is available in that the grade-point average for all women is 3.06 as compared with 2.88 for all men.

TABLE I
MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES BORROWED BY MEN AND WOMEN

	Number in Group	Mean Number of Titles Borrowed
Women.....	1,169	22.17 ± .374
Men.....	1,109	13.17 ± .252
Difference in favor of women.....		9.00 ± .427
All students.....	2,278	17.79 ± .207

TABLE II
BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND NEWSPAPERS READ BY
TEACHERS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

	Men	Underclass Women	Upperclass Women
Mean number of books read last week.....	1.11	1.45	1.55
Mean number of magazines read regularly.....	2.03	2.03	2.38
Mean number of newspapers read regularly.....	2.02	1.69	1.76
Mean number of hours spent in reading per week.....	5.52	4.52	5.18

Class differences.—Table III shows the titles borrowed by each class. Freshmen and sophomores differ appreciably from juniors and seniors. While the range is not great, the widest differences among classes are between sophomores and juniors. From this we conclude that class differences are most economically described in terms of upperclassmen versus underclassmen.

Carnovsky⁶ has suggested that differences in the reading of

⁶L. Carnovsky, "The Dormitory library," *Library quarterly*, III (January, 1933), 37-66.

class groups may be explained by the fact that some selection takes place during each year of college, i.e., the poorer students, in terms of scholarship and reading ability, fail to return to school or are dismissed because of poor records. The grade-point averages of different classes illuminates this contention. These are:

Freshmen, 2.77 Junior, 3.08
Sophomore, 2.95 Senior, 3.21

Thus the average scholarship of each class level tends to increase with each succeeding year in college, and hence the im-

TABLE III
MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES BORROWED BY EACH CLASS GROUP

Group	Number in Group	Mean
Freshmen.....	747	15.75 ± .352
Sophomore.....	619	16.06 ± .332
Junior.....	465	19.31 ± .454
Senior.....	448	22.00 ± .381

plication that the students with poor reading habits are dropped from college.

Unless one denies entirely the value of a college education, the experience of previous years undoubtedly tends to improve students of the upper classes as readers.

Again, the tendency in higher education today is toward increased freedom and development of the student's initiative at the senior-college level. Exemption from class assignments, presence of individual-work courses and honors courses, all result in more reading on the part of upperclassmen.

Scholarship.—To contrast loans to students representing different levels of scholastic attainment at different institutions it is clearly necessary to have an index for scholarship. Of those commonly used, the most convenient to apply is probably the course "mark" expressed in terms of "grade-points." Holzinger's discussion of the normal probability curve⁷ illustrates the

⁷ Karl J. Holzinger, *Statistical methods for students in education* (Boston: Ginn & Co.), p. 221.

method employed. By this process, a comparable grade-point value is assigned to each letter grade at each institution. A grade-point average is computed for each student and this value is used to represent scholarship standing. The number of titles read by each student has little to do with the grade-point average ($r = +.173 \pm .020$ for the entire group of 2,278 students).

Since the correlation between scholarship and amount of reading is low, the question arises, to what extent do students of high scholastic standing use the library more than students of

TABLE IV
MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES BORROWED BY STUDENTS
GROUPED ACCORDING TO SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship Group	Number in Group	Mean Number of Titles Borrowed	Difference
3.60-5.00 <i>B</i> average or above.....	447	$22.65 \pm .595$	$3.55 \pm .667$
2.60-3.59 <i>C</i> average to <i>B</i>	1,123	$19.10 \pm .302$	
1.60-2.59 <i>D</i> average to <i>C</i>	644	$16.61 \pm .369$	$2.49 \pm .476$ 5.05 ± 1.012
0.20-1.59 Lower than <i>D</i> average.....	64	$11.56 \pm .942$	

low scholarship standing? Table IV gives the mean number of titles borrowed by students grouped as to scholarship. The differences among the groups are statistically significant: they are more than four times their probable errors. That is to say, good students tend to borrow, on the average, more titles than poor students.

A partial explanation of the low correlation between number of loans and scholarship may be found in the factor of reading ability. Good students can read fast, while poor students must reread often to master a given assignment.

Again, the computation of the grade-point average includes all courses. Had such courses as laboratory courses, first-year language courses, and others which normally require little li-

brary reading been excluded, the relation might have been higher. Further information on this question is presented later.

Institutional differences.—Table V gives the mean number of titles borrowed by students grouped according to college. The differences among institutions are all significant since they are based on total enrolment. Some, however, are clearly much greater than others.

TABLE V
MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES BORROWED BY STUDENTS
OF EACH COLLEGE

	Means Equated to Represent 98 Days Each
College A.....	19.70
College B.....	18.04
College C.....	11.46
College D.....	29.40
College E.....	23.32
College F.....	17.35
College G.....	14.93

A comparison of Table V with Tables I, III, and IV reveals that institutional differences outweigh class, sex, and scholarship differences. For example men at College D borrow more titles than women at Colleges G, C, or B.

From these data we conclude that institutional objectives, methods of instruction, and provisions for library service are more important in determining the extent to which students use the library than such factors as the distribution of the student body into class and sex groups.

Summary.—The foregoing data are presented to indicate how student use of the library may be identified and analyzed. Evidence will be presented later to show that the above conditions may be reversed in the case of a particular institution. How far they are applicable to a given college can be determined only by individual study at that college. Hence the necessity of recording and analyzing student loans as a prelude to organization for wider service in the library.

Furthermore, these data indicate the point at which efforts to

increase library use might well be aimed, namely, the undergraduate men of low scholastic standing, and the other groups in proportion to the extent to which they are non-library users. Any careful program of stimulation should begin with a complete analysis of the library's patronage, followed by efforts to interest those groups whose college habits take little notice of the library.

LIBRARY USE FOR SPECIFIC DEPARTMENTS

To relate instruction to student reading, we divided the titles borrowed into "curricular" and "extra-curricular," meaning related or unrelated to the students' program of study.⁸ Of reading so classified, 91 per cent (all titles borrowed) is curricular. Although this does not mean that 91 per cent of the reading is "required," it shows that most student reading is at least course-inspired. And since instructors so largely influence the reading that students do, it is important to discover the nature of such influence and how it varies among the departments.

Amount of reading in different course fields.—Table VI gives the mean number of titles borrowed in each department of the seven institutions. Library use is consistently high in two groups of departments: namely, the humanities, represented by such courses as English, philosophy, and religion; and the social sciences, represented by education, sociology, and economics. The natural sciences rank low.

The correlation between departments ranked according to mean number of reserved books borrowed and mean number of free books borrowed is $+ .654$. Thus there is some tendency for the same courses to use the library similarly for both types of reading.

Although the classification is by no means exact, social sciences use more reserved books and the humanities more free books. This implies that libraries contain more books in the

⁸ The classification into "curricular" and "extra-curricular" is on the basis of courses taken rather than upon required or assigned reading. Thus all books read concerning education would be classed as curricular if the student were enrolled for a course in education. Extra-curricular reading is reading which clearly does not pertain to any of the courses taken.

field of humanities than in the social sciences. A library containing relatively few good books in the social sciences would need to reserve a larger proportion to make them equally available

TABLE VI
MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES BORROWED PER STUDENT
IN EACH COURSE FIELD

Course Field	Mean Number of Titles
Orientation.....	9.18
English.....	6.00
History.....	5.48
Education.....	5.04
Sociology.....	4.20
Political science.....	3.60
Philosophy.....	3.06
Home economics.....	2.94
Psychology.....	2.58
Religion and Bible.....	2.33
Economics.....	2.16
Music.....	1.98
Classics.....	1.84
Zoölogy, biology and eugenics.....	1.63
Dramatics and play production.....	1.62
Speech, debate.....	1.38
Fine arts.....	1.08
Romance languages.....	1.01
German.....	0.98
Geology.....	0.74
Physical education.....	0.49
Hygiene and physiology.....	0.46
Journalism.....	0.46
Physics.....	0.39
Botany.....	0.35
Mathematics.....	0.21
Chemistry.....	0.17

to all students than would another course field, e.g., humanities, in which necessary books are more numerous.

In the institutions studied, there is a tendency for the largest departments (in terms of student enrolment) to rank relatively high on:

- a) Number of student loans ($r = +.454$, language and natural-science courses being the obvious exceptions).
- b) Number of titles and copies reserved ($r = +.77$; psychology courses reserve few titles, but many copies of each title which are widely read).
- c) Amount of money spent for new books each year. There are certain exceptions to this which indicate that appropriations for departments should not be based on number of students alone.

Randall⁹ has defined certain factors with respect to cost of books and number of new books published annually in certain fields. When data on the use of books such as those described above are combined with information concerning publications in specific fields, a much more scientific procedure will be available for drawing up the library book budget.

The evidence presented shows that use of the library varies for different departments. Certain departments use the library more for reserved books, others more for free books. A noticeable gap in the data is the extent to which reference books and periodicals are used. If information concerning use of these types were included, the library could accurately describe the nature and extent of library service to such departments. To date libraries tend to meet departmental needs as they occur with consequent inefficiency and injustice.

Relation between scholarship and loans in different fields.—By classifying reading by course fields, we can relate reading to scholarship in each field. This was done for three departments, English, history, and education. These three have the dual advantage of enrolling many students and of demanding extensive reading. Table VII gives the correlation coefficients between number of titles loaned and the grade received by each student for each of the three departments. Table VII shows a slightly higher relation between scholarship and loans when the analysis is limited to specific departments and to the grades obtained in those departments. And yet there is considerable disparity between reading and scholarship. This condition suggests several implications affecting the administrator, instructor, and librarian.

⁹ William M. Randall, "The College library book budget," *Library quarterly*, I (October, 1931), 421-36.

First, the data suggest that reading assignments are not selected with sufficient reference to students of superior ability. Good students often read no more than the minimum assignments because they are not interested in the other suggested books. The importance of this is emphasized by the fact that 91 per cent of the reading of students is definitely related to courses. Since the instructor's rôle in defining reading is so great, he should take into consideration the relative abilities of various students and attempt to select readings better suited to their needs.

TABLE VII
CORRELATION BETWEEN GRADE RECEIVED IN EACH COURSE AND
TOTAL NUMBER OF TITLES BORROWED IN THE SAME FIELD

College	r for History	r for English	r for Education
D.....	$+.271 \pm .053$	$+.172 \pm .052$	$+.136 \pm .079$
E.....	$+.162 \pm .060$	$+.085 \pm .055$	$+.426 \pm .083$
F.....	$+.200 \pm .039$	$+.327 \pm .031$	$+.274 \pm .043$
C.....	$+.007 \pm .080$	$+.393 \pm .064$	$+.059 \pm .080$
B.....	$+.376 \pm .062$	$+.224 \pm .075$	$+.045 \pm .100$
G.....	$+.118 \pm .066$	$-.038 \pm .084$	$+.333 \pm .057$
A.....	$+.291 \pm .095$	$+.110 \pm .062$	$+.137 \pm .093$

Another reason for the variation between reading and scholarship is that many students who read widely for a given course receive low marks. This indicates that some students waste their time on reading, so far as academic recognition is the test. In extreme cases, i.e., where students find it necessary to re-read a single assignment several times, remedial procedures to teach the student to read are clearly needed.

Summary.—The data show plainly enough that the library cannot meet departmental needs without more satisfactory records of library use than are made in most libraries at present. Such records are necessary for efficient administration and serve certain purposes.

First, they show the extent to which students in each department are being encouraged to use the library. The fact that most library reading is curricular does not mean that the librarian has nothing to do with it. It defines a wide field of serv-

ice which can be explored only through complete and efficient records.

Second, such records are needed to apportion the book budget. So long as the expenditure for specific departments is based on the amount spent the previous year, professors will rightly complain of the static condition. When the librarian can show, however, the relative extent to which departments use the library, and the types of material used, there can be no serious quarrel with the relative apportionment of funds.

INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT READING

Institutional differences in loans to class, sex, and scholarship groups.—Table VIII compares the number of loans to each student group at each institution.

TABLE VIII
MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES BORROWED BY VARIOUS STUDENT
GROUPS AT EACH INSTITUTION

College	Mean for All Students	Rank	Mean for Men	Rank	Mean for Women	Rank	Mean for Upper- classmen	Rank	Mean for Under- classmen	Rank	Mean for High Scholarship Students	Mean for Low Scholarship Students
D.....	29.40	1	20.14	1	39.99	1	32.01	1	27.89	1	33.78	24.65
E.....	23.32	2			23.32	3	22.30	4	23.77	2	23.11	24.00
A.....	19.70	3	15.22	3	24.49	2	22.66	3	17.51	3	21.77	17.92
B.....	18.04	4	17.57	2	19.66	5	24.36	2	15.01	4	19.26	17.36
F.....	17.35	5	13.00	5	21.51	4	21.24	5	14.18	5	20.51	15.16
G.....	14.93	6	13.76	4	17.67	6	17.89	6	13.07	6	18.62	11.90
C.....	11.46	7	5.31	6	16.38	7	15.37	7	9.35	7	14.49	7.81

The data show that to differentiate institutions at either end of the scale it matters little whether loans are distributed by sex and class groups or reported as a gross total. For institutions at the middle of the scale, however, there is some variation when different factors are taken into account (see College *B* for example). Distinctions between sexes are most important; distinctions between students of different scholarship levels are least important, when used as a basis for institutional comparison.

It is apparent that no single figure can represent student use of the library. One might assume that when the total per-capita loans at a given institution are many, that it is being widely used by all student groups. But Table VIII shows this contrary to fact. A library may be widely used in general and still neglect particular groups. Librarians cannot assume that good books will appeal to all students alike. Hence each student group must be studied and supplied with suitable material to the extent of known variations in need and use. It cannot be assumed that all students will use the library to the same extent, for the data show that they do not.

TABLE IX

MEAN NUMBER OF RESERVED BOOKS, RESERVED CHARGES, FREE CURRICULAR TITLES AND FREE EXTRA-CURRICULAR TITLES LOANED TO STUDENTS IN EACH COLLEGE

College	Mean Number of Reserved Titles	Mean Number of Reserved Charges	Mean Number of Free Curricular Titles	Mean Number of Free Extra-Curricular Titles
E.....	19.49	37.49	2.57	1.26
D.....	19.37	35.77	9.65	1.38
A.....	12.58	24.27	4.69	2.44
G.....	10.48	26.38	3.26	1.19
C.....	8.43	19.67	1.43	1.61
B.....	8.41	24.50	6.32	3.31
F.....	7.92	20.63	7.96	1.47

Institutional differences in reserved and free reading.—We come now to the question, do colleges ranking high on the number of reserved books borrowed also rank high on the number of free titles borrowed? Table IX contains the facts. No significant relation is found between the loans of reserved and free titles at the colleges here studied. A given institution may rank low on one and high on the other.

Data on both reserved and free loans help to describe student library use. All librarians are handicapped by limited funds. In many cases, college administrators are slow to believe that more funds are needed. Yet if adequate records were at hand to describe library use beyond assigned readings, the administrator's response might be better.

Again, comparisons among institutions as such require both types of material. A library used widely for reserved material is not necessarily widely used for free loans. To compare accurately two or more institutions, it is important to have data on both types of use.

Institutional differences in reading by departments.—Table X gives mean loans in ten departments for each college.

TABLE X
MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES LOANED IN EACH DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT	COLLEGE						
	C	G	B	E	F	A	D
Classics.....	0.70	0.53	0.16	5.06	2.48	1.72	1.21
Economics.....	3.84	1.97	1.53	2.89	3.17	0.28	0.50
Education.....	2.24	8.73	5.50	2.73	2.88	7.33	8.13
English.....	3.14	0.95	2.39	5.59	6.95	5.33	13.20
German.....	0.86	0.09	1.99	1.19	1.22	0.10	0.57
History.....	3.38	2.67	4.42	6.22	8.35	3.07	9.28
Philosophy.....	4.95	0.05	2.11	4.71	5.93	3.33	1.18
Political science.....	1.78	1.40	5.50	6.66	0.40	4.73	
Psychology.....	3.46				3.12	2.13	3.71
Religion.....	1.30	2.52	7.66		1.49	4.30	4.04
Romance languages.....	2.11	0.04	0.76	1.79	1.34	0.29	0.96
Sociology.....	3.57	4.80	3.13	3.11	1.84	4.71	9.49
Speech.....	0.54		3.57	3.14	0.97	0.61	0.57
Zoölogy.....	0.11		0.86	3.36	1.77	0.52	2.10

There is no tendency for a given institution to rank the same in all departments. Perhaps the nearest approach is College *D*, which ranks first in English, history, sociology, and psychology. But it also ranks sixth in economics. These differences in loans for different course fields emphasize the important relation between methods of instruction and library use. Methods of instruction vary from college to college. Hence at a given institution it is of small use to know that English courses elsewhere make heavy demands on the library unless the methods used are similar. The librarian should know the situation in his particular college. Such knowledge helps to prevent surprise demands, and enables the librarian to be an efficient aid to classroom method.

Library use in relation to library support.—We have shown that institutions vary widely in the extent to which students use the library. It has further been shown that differences in library use are produced by differences in teaching methods or in the content of similarly titled courses. It remains now to indicate the relation between library support and student use of the library. Specifically do students use a good library more than they do a poor one?

Let us consider, first, use of the library for reserved books. Table XI gives for four institutions the facts relating to library

TABLE XI
DATA CONCERNING LIBRARY HOLDINGS AND SUPPORT

College	Number of Titles from Check- List <i>A</i> *	Number of Peri- odicals from Check-List <i>B</i> †	Average Annual Expenditure for Books	Weighted Salary Expenditure‡
<i>D</i>	200	148	\$2,405	\$6,550
<i>E</i>	187	96	\$2,390	\$6,556
<i>G</i>	139	74	\$ 996	\$6,461
<i>C</i>	122	102	\$2,076	\$4,496

* Check-list *A* was compiled from C. B. Shaw's *A List of books for college libraries* by selecting the titles listed as reference books in each field.

† Check-List *B* was compiled from the Shaw list and represents the periodicals there classed by department.

‡ Enrolment was held constant by averaging the salary expenditure of institutions of different size and weighting them according to their average.

support and holdings. The first two colleges are those in which reserved loans are many, the second two those in which reserved loans are few. Colleges *D* and *E* (where reserved reading is high) rank higher on all items except one—College *C* has more periodicals from Check-list *B* than College *E*.

For Colleges *E* and *D* one may say that both are good libraries, used widely by students. If no other evidence were available, one would be safe in labeling them good libraries. But one cannot state on the basis of the foregoing evidence that the libraries of Colleges *G* and *C* are not used widely. One must consider the situation with respect to use of free loans.

Evidence on the use of the library for free loans is available for thirty-five college libraries included in the North Central

Association study of library standards. Table XII gives the correlation between ranks on the measures of library support and mean number of free titles borrowed. The correlations are all positive and show a clear correspondence between library support and student use. Table XII shows that good library service does not just happen. It results from conscious effort on the part of the administration plus necessary funds, and a competent staff. Students seldom use a library which is inadequately financed and poorly administered.

TABLE XII
CORRELATION BETWEEN MEAN NUMBER OF TITLES READ
AND CERTAIN MEASURES OF LIBRARY SUPPORT

Mean Number of Free Titles Read Versus	Correlation
Number of Check-list <i>A</i> titles held	+ .25
Number of periodicals from Check-list <i>B</i>	+ .21
Average annual expenditure for books	+ .48
Weighted salary expenditure	+ .35

CONCLUSION

We have now presented (1) an analysis of college library use by certain student groups; (2) an analysis of library use in certain departmental fields; and (3) an analysis of institutional differences in library use as affected by library appropriations. While the data relevant to each of these problems have certain specific implications, their more general trends seem to justify the following conclusions.

1. Students grouped by sex, class, and scholarship differ significantly in the extent to which they use library materials. Women borrow more than men, upperclassmen more than underclassmen, and good students more than poor students. The differences remain when library loans are divided into reserved loans, free curricular loans, and free extra-curricular loans.

2. Departmental demands on the college library vary greatly. The humanities and social sciences require much reading, while the natural sciences and languages require little. Although, in general, the departments using the library most use it for all types of material, the social sciences use reserved books relatively more, while the humanities use free books more. In

part, the difference is due to differences in the teaching methods employed in each group of departments.

3. Institutions differ widely (*a*) in the extent to which sex, class, and scholarship groups borrow library materials; (*b*) the relative amount of reserved and free materials borrowed; and (*c*) the amount of library reading in specific course fields. At a particular institution the tendencies noted in paragraphs one and two may be less apparent or even reversed.

4. Strong book collections and adequate library funds are associated with wide use of the library by student groups.

Implications.—The application of these conclusions to a given college library is best illustrated by reference to the functions of the college library. A recent, explicit statement of these functions has been made by Louis R. Wilson:

1. To furnish material for instruction to students in appropriate environment and through a personnel competent to serve as efficient liaison officers to connect instructor and student with library resources

2. To develop general reading interests through open shelves, browsing rooms, attractive bookstores, book lists, and a stimulating readers' advisers' service

3. To furnish new technical books and periodicals which enable the members of the faculty and library staff to keep abreast of their subjects

4. To meet the needs of such members of the faculty as are engaged in productive investigation¹⁰

The data presented in this study chiefly concern the first two.

By implication only the foregoing four functions suggest, as a common element, the responsibility of maintaining the records needed to show how well each function is being performed. Wise expenditure of funds demands that the budget be allocated on the basis of facts concerning library use. Such records should distinguish not only types of readers, but also types of materials used (i.e., reserved and free books, curricular and extra-curricular loans, and loans to particular departments). Beyond evaluating the service of the library to student groups, such data are useful in selecting books to be reserved, in allocating funds for books to various departments, and in revealing the points at which the budget needs revision. The maintenance of some

¹⁰ *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, XXV, 441.

such record is the first step in a constructive program of library service.¹¹

The evidence presented has shown that college libraries are used largely for the type of material mentioned in function 1. Baldly stated, 91 per cent of student library use is for curricular materials. This fact (i.e., that college libraries are used for little else) should not obscure the additional fact—namely, that use of curricular material is large only as compared with free reading. Judged by any absolute standard, it is small indeed. If there were such a person as “the average student,” he would borrow eleven reserved books from the library during one semester, each of which he would use approximately twice. In addition, he would borrow five and one-half free curricular titles, and one and one-half free extra-curricular titles. Still more noteworthy is the fact that 20 per cent of the students borrowed, in all, five titles or less. Such meagre intellectual fare represents the library’s contribution to one semester’s work!

The second function, namely, “to develop general reading interests,” is the peculiar concern of the college library. Responsibility for the encouragement of general reading in most colleges comes to the librarian by default. Even instructors in English are too preoccupied with specific titles and types of reading to stimulate general reading extensively, even though they insist on its importance for most students. If the library does not make this task its own, it is in grave danger of neglect. Among the institutions herein studied either the library lacks suitable materials for extra-curricular reading or curricular reading crowds it out.

We may exclude the possibility that students will not read unless required to. At certain institutions most students read widely, and at all institutions some students read widely. Accordingly, one should look first to the library’s budget and holdings for an explanation of student use below the averages we have presented.

¹¹ The North Central Association Committee on Revision of Library Standards has demonstrated that an effective method of keeping such records is a single card for each student, on which is listed each title withdrawn from the library.

The evidence shows that student library use is definitely related to amount of money spent for the library. Even a strong faculty and competent library staff will be handicapped by the disadvantages due to poor library facilities, inadequately housed, and poorly supported. If the library is to take its proper place in the educational program of the institution it must be given its fair share of the college finances. Efforts by faculty and library staff otherwise amount to little.

A large budget for the library, however, cannot always insure wide use by students. Without an efficient personnel, even the best college library will fall short of its possibilities. Accordingly, the factors found to affect student reading must be understood and controlled as they apply to the local situation.

The first of these is perhaps the prevailing disposition to or from the use of books. The disposition varies widely among institutions and determines to a considerable extent the student response to a librarian's efforts at stimulation. Yet previous indifference to reading as a leisure activity may sometimes be used to render new reading opportunities exciting.

Second, the literary traditions of the college are important. At one institution extensive reading was fashionable. While such factors do not lend themselves to statistical description, they are sometimes decisive.

Closely related is what may be termed "institutional tone." At one institution the purpose of the college may be to give students a strong background of classical literature and history. The library, of course, is expected to provide materials appropriate to this purpose. Hence a good library at this institution will fall far short of perfection elsewhere. Libraries cannot be fairly judged except in the light of institutional aims.

Again, the close relation between instruction and reading suggests that many libraries are not using the resources of the instructional staff to best advantage. Obviously, the first requisite of efficient faculty co-operation is to acquaint the faculty with the library's resources. The influence of a single competent and respected professor can do much to further library use, and

the wise librarian will do all he can to win the confidence and co-operation of such instructors.

Finally, much research is needed upon the whole field of reading habits. For example, we do not know the relative effect of contact with libraries in the home, the community, and the high school upon the reading of college students. Again, do students who read widely in college retain these habits after graduation? With the book-production facilities of the world, equipped to deluge the reader with a mass of printed material, it is important to know to what extent education has prepared him to select wisely from this material. A study of the reading habits of selected students at various stages in the educational process would do much toward evaluating the college library's contribution in this respect.

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